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THE WASHING

Chinese Official Said Exposer of CIA Turncoat

Los Angeles Times

A senior Chinese intelligence officer, reported by foreign news agencies this week to have defected to the West, is the source who tipped the United States last fall to the 33-year espionage career of CIA turncoat Larry Wu-tai Chin, according to a government official familiar with the case.

Yu Zhensan, once head of the foreign affairs bureau of China's Ministry of State Security, was spirited to the United States "within a couple of weeks, one way or the other," of Chin's arrest Nov. 22, said the official, who refused to be identified.

The source said that Yu has been debriefed by U.S. intelligence officials and given a new identity.

The official refused to explain why Yu chose to flee China or where he is living. A French news report that Yu is in Taiwan has been denied by a government spokesman in Taipei.

Yu, said to be the son of two prominent Chinese revolutionaries and in his late 30s, was one of the top officials in China's recently revamped intelligence bureau, formerly called the Ministry of Public Security. His post reportedly gave him wide knowledge of Chinese espionage activities abroad, including the names of Chinese agents and suspected agents from other nations working in China.

Chin, a 63-year-old retired CIA translator and intelligence officer at the time of his arrest, committed suicide in his Virginia jail cell last February, two weeks after being convicted of spying for the Chinese.

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